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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/826,367

04/19/2004

Satoshi Aoyama

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EXAMINER

WANG, EUGENIA

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1795

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

03/25/2008

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/826,367	<b>Applicant(s)</b> AOYAMA ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> EUGENIA WANG	<b>Art Unit</b> 1795	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 January 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                                | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

1. In response to the amendment received January 22, 2008:
  - a. Claims 30-32 have been added as per Applicant's request. Claims 1-32 are pending.
  - b. The previous rejections of record have been maintained.

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on January 22, 2008 has been entered.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 30 recites "a purge gas" (line 6). However, claim 1, which claim 30 is dependent on already states having a purge gas (lines 12-13). With respect to claim 30, it is uncertain whether Applicant is speaking of a purge gas different from that of

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claim 1 or a different one. (For purposes of prosecution, Examiner is taking the claim interpretation that the purge gas of claim 30 is the same as that of claim 1. Accordingly, Examiner suggests using definite articles ("said" or "the") in order to properly refer to the antecedent in claim 1.) (Note: If a different purge gas is being referred to, the indefiniteness would still apply, as now the claim language states that the same purge-no-purge mode is used with two different purge gases.)

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-7 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 2003/0056440 (Aoyama et al.).

As to claim 1, Aoyama et al. teach a power system (see fig. 1). The power system includes fuel cell [70], a fuel gas generation system (vaporizer [20], mixer [30], reformer [40], and hydrogen separator [60]). The hydrogen line is supplied to the fuel cell via inlet [71]. Furthermore, there is a purge system for the hydrogen separator, which is operated using pump [74]. Pump [74] is connected to a control unit [10]. The controller is also connected to the raw material line via valve [31], and thus has the capability to receive a stop signal for supplying hydrogen to the fuel cell and to activate a purge mode to purge gas or a no-purge mode to merely stop the hydrogen flow.

It has been held that the recitation of an element is “capable” of performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. *In re Hutchinson*, 69 USPQ 138.

While intended use recitations and other types of functional language cannot be entirely disregarded. However, in apparatus, article, and composition claims, intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967); *In re Otto*, 312 F.2d 937, 938, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Claims directed to apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. *In re Danly*, 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959). See also MPEP § 2114.

The manner of operating the device does not differentiate an apparatus claim from the prior art. A claim containing a “recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus” if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1987).

As to claim 2, Aoyama et al. inputs many parameters that would indicate the working state of the power system, for example the temperature sensor [64] on the

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hydrogen separator [60] (fig. 1). Since they are both connected to the controller, the controller is capable of selecting the hydrogen purge or hydrogen-no purge based on this parameter. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claims 3, 10, and 11, the structure of Aoyama et al. in fig. 1 is capable of performing the function of the claims using controller [10] and its connections. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claim 4, Aoyama et al. inputs many parameters that would indicate the working state of the power system, for example the temperature sensor [64] on the hydrogen separator [60] (fig. 1). Since they are both connected to the controller, the controller is capable of switching to hydrogen purge or hydrogen-no purge based on this parameter. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claims 5 and 6, controller [10] measures the temperature of the hydrogen separating portion [60] via sensor [64], and the controller is capable of switching from hydrogen purge to hydrogen no-purge mode based on a preset level of a temperature. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claim 7, the system of Aoyama et al. has a booster mechanism that boosts the pressure of hydrogen in the hydrogen supply line. This is done using raw material valve [31] (closing the valve reduces pressure, and opening it increases pressure to the mixer, which would affect the anode inlet pressure). Since the valve is connected to the controller [10], the system controls the booster mechanism.

***Response to Arguments***

5. Applicant's arguments filed January 22, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that the previous Office Action/Advisory action is entirely inconsistent with Office procedures to assert that it is Applicants' burden to show recited features in claim 1 are not described in the applied reference.

Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's statement. Examiner has provided the basis as to why the Aoyama et al. reads on the *claimed* invention. Applicant has not provided any compelling reasoning or evidence to the contrary, and thus Examiner maintains the previous position.

Applicant argues that the Advisory Action mischaracterizes the stop control module as a functional feature, stating that Aoyama et al.'s device is capable of functioning in the same manner.

Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's position. The stop control module, as claimed, is defined only by functions. These functions are capable of being performed by the controller. Examiner is uncertain how something that is defined merely by functions is a structural feature. Thus, Examiner has applied the interpretation that the stop control module is functional, as it is defined only by functions.

Office personnel are to give claims their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the supporting disclosure. *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054-55, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027-28 (Fed. Cir. 1997). Also, limitations appearing in the specification but not

recited in the claim are not read into the claim. See *In re Zletz*, 893F.2d 319, 321-22, 13 USPQ2d, 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Applicant argues that Aoyama does not disclose an element that can reasonably be interpreted to correspond to the claimed stop control module.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. The controller of Aoyama et al. is relied upon to encompass being capable of having the claimed stop control module. Again, since the stop control module is defined only by functions, it is unclear how the stop control module is a structural feature and not a functional feature, and how this is not encompassed by the controller of Aoyama et al. The functionality which is specific to what Applicant's claim is not given weight, as it is functional definitions of an apparatus claim, wherein it is viewed that the apparatus of Aoyama et al. is capable of a "stop module" defined by the actions in the claim. It is unclear how Aoyama et al.'s system cannot be interpreted as capable of having such a stop control module, wherein the stop control module is completely defined by functionality. The claim language does not exclude this interpretation.

Applicant argues that Examiner's interpretation that the control unit functions as the stop signal input module and stop control module fails to give plain meaning and broadest reasonable construction to each of the claim elements.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner has set forth her position and the rationale behind the opinion. Examiner would like to point out that Applicant's instant application has the functions of such modules embodied within the controller and thus is unsure how the broadest reasonable interpretation is not being given.



Applicant argues that they are not reciting functional limitations.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. The modules are defined by functions, and thus the module is not seen to be a structure. It is also unclear on how the modules are not embodied or capable of being embodied by the control unit. The term module is broader than what Applicant is interpreting, as it is defined by functions and thus is not necessarily a physical aspect. It is uncertain how the controller (computer) of the prior art cannot operate in the same manner to have modules therein.

Applicant argues that Examiner does not establish that Aoyama explicitly/inherently presents all of the features claimed.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner's position is clearly stated in the previous Office action and upheld in the Advisory action. It is reiterated herein that the controller of Aoyama et al. that the controller of Aoyama et al. is capable of functioning in the same manner as the claimed invention (please see the rejection for the Office's policy on "capable of" with respect to apparatus claims). Therefore it is capable of modules therein, as claimed, where the modules themselves are functions, as they are only defined by functions. Applicant makes many broad statements without providing a rationale or reasoning as to why Examiner's position is incorrect. Accordingly, such arguments are not persuasive, and the previous position is maintained.

Applicant argues that the Office Actions and Advisory Actions have not established that Aoyama discloses an identical or substantially identical device.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner's position is clearly stated in the previous Office action and upheld in the Advisory action. Applicant makes many broad

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statements without providing a rationale or reasoning as to why Examiner's position is incorrect. Accordingly, such arguments are not persuasive, and the previous position is maintained. (It is noted that the *claimed* invention has not been structurally distinguished over that of the prior art).

Applicant argues that Aoyama et al. disclose a hydrogen generation device that does not require a purge gas supply (para 0033) and thus cannot be considered to activate and control in the hydrogen purge mode.

Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's position. Applicant is mischaracterizing Aoyama et al.'s teaching. Although there is a statement that the system may do without such purge gas supply, the rest of the paragraph and teaching embody having the purge gas supply. The beginning portion of para 0033 is drawn to having a purge gas supply, as are the drawings (see para 0033; fig. 1). One of ordinary skill in the art would not read the end of para 0033 in a vacuum. Contrary to Applicant's argument, it is clear that the preferred embodiment of Aoyama et al. includes the purge gas supply. Therefore, the previous position is upheld.

Applicant states that the disclosed structure that includes a recycle purge gas pump that recycles hydrogen and purge gas cannot reasonably be considered to teach/suggest any stop control module for activating and controlling in a hydrogen purge mode a purge gas supply module to remove hydrogen from a hydrogen separation module.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner's position with respect to the prior art teaching is clearly stated in the previous Office action and upheld in the Advisory action.

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Applicant makes many broad statements without providing a rationale or reasoning as to why Examiner's position is incorrect. Accordingly, such arguments are not persuasive, and the previous position is maintained.

Applicant argues that the control unit of Aoyama et al. cannot reasonably be considered to activate and control in any alleged hydrogen purge mode.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner's position with respect to the prior art teaching is clearly stated in the previous Office action and upheld in the Advisory action. Applicant makes many broad statements without providing a rationale or reasoning as to why Examiner's position is incorrect. Accordingly, such arguments are not persuasive, and the previous position is maintained.

With respect to the arguments regarding the 103 rejections, Applicant argues that the prior art used to obviate the rejected claims (Yamanashi et al. and Epp et al.) do not cure the deficiencies of the primary reference (Aoyama et al.). Applicant does not argue how the combination is not proper. Therefore, the Examiner maintains the obviousness rejections and upholds the rejection of the primary reference, as above.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 8, 9, 12, and 13 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aoyama et al.

The teachings of Aoyama et al. have been previously taught and are herein incorporated.

As to claim 8, Aoyama et al. teach a heat exchanger [50] that is adjacent to the hydrogen separator [60] (fig. 1). Aoyama does not provide a connection for operation of the heat exchanger to the control unit, so that the stop control module (controller [1]) controls the heat exchanger to keep the temperature of the hydrogen separation module in the no-purge mode. The motivation for providing a heat exchanger to the hydrogen separation module during the no purge mode is that the hydrogen separator membrane has a tendency of becoming fragile or brittle during low temperature absorbing (para 0006, lines 1-4). Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to provide a heat exchanger

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adjacent to keep the hydrogen separator at a certain temperature during the no-purge mode in order to prevent the separator membrane from becoming brittle.

As to claim 9, the obviated structure of Aoyama et al. is capable of providing the function of claim 9. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claim 12, Aoyama et al.'s teaching in fig. 1 has a controller that regulates the supply of material to the chemical reaction module via raw material valve [31] and air valve [32]. Aoyama et al.'s structure with the controller receives restart request, and the connection of the controller would be capable of supplying a greater amount of material to the chemical reaction module in response to input of a restart request after the stop control in the hydrogen purge mode.

*Aoyama et al. does not teach that the control unit is connected to the fuel cell and checks the output demand to the fuel cell. However there is motivation for judging how much raw material should be supplied in order to meet the demand. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to provide a controller to check the fuel demand of the fuel cells in order not to oversupply or undersupply the fuel cell with the reactant.*

As to claim 13, Aoyama's obviated system of claim 12 would have the capability to provide the functionality of controlling supply based off of output demand. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

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7. Claims 17-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aoyama et al, (as applied to claims 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, and 12) in view of US 2001/0016276 (Yamanashi).

As to claim 17, 19, and 24-28, Aoyama et al. do not teach that the fuel cell is used in the motor driving source in a mobile object.

Yamanashi teach a fuel cell used in a vehicle (abs). As seen in fig. 1, the fuel cell that is connected to the drive motor via fuel cell control unit [23] and vehicle control unit [24]. The motivation for using the system of Aoyama et al. in a vehicle, where the fuel cell is connect to the drive motor, is that it a source of more environmentally friendly energy, as compared to conventional fuels. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to use the fuel cell system of Aoyama et al. in the car system of Yamanashi to provide a cleaner option of providing power to a car.

As to claim 18, Yamanashi's motor inherently has an on-off state start switch, as is evidenced by the presence of the vehicle control until [24] (fig. 1). The combined fuel cell and control unit of Aoyama et al. in the system of Yamanashi would be capable of stopping the hydrogen purge mode when the starter switch is off, since the fuel cell control unit and vehicle control unit are connected. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claim 20, the combined control system of Aoyama et al. (with respect to the fuel cell) in tandem with that of Yamanashi (the connection of the vehicle control unit, which is connected to the fuel cell control unit), would have the capability of

manipulating the moving of the mobile object and of restarting the fuel gas generation system upon input operation of allowing movement during the purge mode. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claim 21, the combined control system of Aoyama et al. (with respect to the fuel cell) in tandem with that of Yamanashi (the connection of the vehicle control unit, which is connected to the fuel cell control unit) has been previously obviated. The vehicle shown in fig. 1 of Yamanashi has vehicle speed sensor connected to vehicle control unit as well. Therefore the combined structure of Yamanashi and Aoyama et al. would have the capability of restarting the fuel gas generation system with respect to a preset moving speed in the hydrogen no purge mode. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.)

As to claims 22 and 23, Aoyama et al. is capable of receiving a restart request via controller [10]. (See rejection of claim 1 for Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus.) The use of Aoyama et al.'s fuel cell in the use of vehicle has been obviated with Yamanashi. Aoyama et al. further teaches the temperature monitoring of the hydrogen separating portion [60] via sensor [64]. Aoyama et al. also teach a heat exchanger [50] that is adjacent to the hydrogen separator [60] (fig. 1).

Aoyama does not provide a connection for operation of the heat exchanger to the control unit, so that it can be used to warm the fuel gas generation system in response to a restart request when the observed temperature is not higher than a preset lower limit while in the hydrogen purge mode. The motivation for providing heat to the hydrogen separation module is that the hydrogen separator membrane has a tendency

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of becoming fragile or brittle during low temperature absorbing (para 0006, lines 1-4). Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to provide a heat exchanger adjacent to keep the hydrogen separator at a certain temperature during the purge mode in order to prevent the separator membrane from becoming brittle.

8. Claims 14-16 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aoyama et al. (as applied to claim 1) in view of US 6063515 (Epp et al.).

As to claim 14, Aoyama et al. does not provide a secondary battery to the fuel cell system with a power supply control module that controls the supply of electric power from the secondary battery.

Epp et al. teach the use of a secondary battery [306] for supplementing the power generated by the fuel cell (col. 11, lines 8-12). As Epp et al.'s system says that the power of the battery is only used when the fuel cell generated power is not enough, a sort of determination control is inherently applied to the load, fuel cell, and battery to determine if the battery power is needed.

The motivation for providing a secondary battery to the teaching of Aoyama et al. is to ensure that the load will still work even if the fuel cell does not provide enough electricity to it. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made combine a secondary battery with a fuel cell in order to guarantee that the load has enough power to run on.

As to claim 15, the battery in Epp et al.'s system inherently has an output demand input module that receives an output demand to the power system, wherein in



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response to the output demand of not greater than a preset level, the power control module controls the secondary battery to output electric power. The support for this is stated within Epp et al.'s use for the battery – the fact that it is only employed when the demand of electrical load [360] exceeds the output of the fuel cell stack [305] (col. 11, lines 8-12). As it talks about the demand of load [360] and output of fuel cell stack [305], it inherently has an output demand and input module. Furthermore, inherent control module has been previously established of being capable of executing the stop control in the hydrogen no-purge mode.

As to claim 16, Epp et al. does not teach that the secondary battery has a state of charge measurement module, wherein the stop control module executes the stop control of the hydrogen purge mode when the observed state of charge is not higher than that of a preset level.

However, there is motivation for providing the state-of-charge measurement module. The motivation for providing such a module on the secondary battery is to ensure that the load (in this case the submarine) has enough power to sustain the load. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to include the state-of-charge measurement module on the battery in order to provide the user of the load with a warning about battery replacement in order to ensure that the load will function. (There is motivation for applying a control system to the stop controller to purge when the state of charge is not higher than a certain value; it is in order to ensure proper shut down of the fuel cell system. Not only is this function obviated, but the system of Epp et al. would be

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capable of being programmed for such a function with the obviated state-of-charge measurement module on the secondary battery.)

As to claims 29, Aoyama et al. does not teach that the fuel cell is used in a mobile object, namely for the motive drive force.

Epp et al. teaches that the fuel cell system is used in submarines (as indicated by the title), but it does not specifically mention that power generated by their fuel cell system is used to power the motor of a mobile object. However, since the fuel cell system is applied to a submarine, the power generated is capable of being used for motor.

9. Claims 1-6, 10-13, 17, 18, 24, 27, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 2003/0072978 (Meyer et al.) in view of Epp et al., as evidenced by US 6410175 (Tillmetz et al.).

As to claim 1, Meyer et al. teach a fuel cell system. The fuel cell system has a fuel processing system [104], where fuel processing system includes an autothermal reformer [134] (para 0017, lines 1-3). The autothermal reformer [134] takes fuel, air, and steam and converts it to hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide (para 0018, lines 1-3). Therefore, the autothermal reformer acts as the chemical reaction module. The hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide is further fed through a shift converter and selective oxidizer (which rids the gaseous product of CO<sub>2</sub>) before being provided to the anode [124] of the fuel cell (figure). Although a stop input module and stop control module is not specifically mentioned in Meyer et al.'s system, one inherently exist. This is exemplified by the fact that it talks about a shutdown system

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and the controlling of a switch [132], valves [141, 152, 154, 156], and blowers [116B, 116C]. In further accordance with Meyer et al.'s shutdown process, diverter valves [140, 149] are opened, which results in purging both sides of both sides of the fuel cell as well as the fuel processing system [104] of residual hydrogen and carbon monoxide (para 0025; para 0026, lines 1-4). Although not specifically mentioned, Meyer et al.'s system is inherently stops with an initial no-purge mode, as some time inherently passes between stopping and shutdown mode. Additionally, it is capable of programmed to stop with the no-purge mode in addition to the purge mode as described above, what with the inherency of the controller due to the sensors and valves present.

It has been held that the recitation of an element is "capable" of performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. *In re Hutchinson*, 69 USPQ 138.

While intended use recitations and other types of functional language cannot be entirely disregarded. However, in apparatus, article, and composition claims, intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967); *In re Otto*, 312 F.2d 937, 938, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Claims directed to apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. In re Danly, 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959). See also MPEP § 2114.

The manner of operating the device does not differentiate an apparatus claim from the prior art. A claim containing a “recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus” if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1987).

Meyer et al. does not teach a hydrogen separation module within a fuel processing module. However Epp et al. teach a hydrogen separator after the reformer section. It would have been obvious to replace the shift converter and selective oxidizer, with Epp’s hydrogen separate also serves the purpose of removing carbon dioxide from the hydrogen (col. 4, lines 8-14)) in order to purify the hydrogen fuel before it is fed into the fuel cell. This change is evidenced by the fact that Tillmetz et al. equates the shift converters, selective oxidizers, and hydrogen separators as having the same function in a fuel processing subsystem (col. 2, lines 10-20). (Providing the hydrogen purification system in the Meyer et al. fuel cell system would also provide the hydrogen because the stop signal input module, purge gas supply module, and stop control module to it as well.)

As to claim 2, Meyer et al.’s system has an input module inputting a predetermined parameter (startup/shutdown), where the stop control module (startup

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and shutdown inherently done by the previously established controller), which selects either the hydrogen purge or hydrogen no-purge mode, as the stop control mode is based on that input parameter and executes the stop control in the selected stop control mode. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claim 3, the control module that inherent exists in Meyer et al.'s system has already been established. Therefore it (acting as the stop control module) would be capable of changing over the stop control mode to the hydrogen purge mode (shutdown) after execution of the stop control in the hydrogen no-purge mode (startup). (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claim 4, the inherent controller of Meyer et al.'s system is capable of acting as a parameter input module that inputs a predetermined parameter (shutdown/startup) representing a working state of at least one of the power system and a system with the power system mounted thereon, wherein the stop control module switches over to the stop control from the hydrogen no-purge mode to the hydrogen purge mode, when the input parameter fulfills a preset condition. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claims 5 and 6, Meyer et al. teaches that during startup the fuel cell that the anode is initially purged (para 0027). This is continued until the reformer [143] and the shift converter [136] (replaced with hydrogen separator) is approximately 250°C.

Meyer et al. does not, however, teach to purge the to purge the fuel processing system until the temperature at the reformer [134] shift converter [136] is 250°C.

However, the motivation for purging the fuel processing system as well is to cleanse the system of any contaminants that could have gathered during the off time, so they would not be provided to the fuel cell once normal function of the fuel cell and fuel processor commenced. Another motivation would be to aid in the warm-up process. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to purge the fuel processor when the shift converter is at a lower temperature than the preset level in order to cleanse the contaminants from the system as well as to aid in the warm-up process.

As to claim 10, Meyer et al. teaches a startup mode (no purge). This actuates the purge gas supply (as the mode switches from shutdown (purge) to startup (no purge)), where actuating is just seen as any movement within the purge valve.

As to claim 11, Meyer et al.'s system inherently actuates the purge gas supply module after a certain time period has elapsed since the actuation of the gas supply module in the hydrogen no-purge mode. This time period elapsed is taken to be that of lag time between two modes (startup/normal/shutdown).

As to claim 12, Meyer et al. teaches a start-up fuel cell procedure (the "restart request input") (para 0027-0029). This start-up procedure is controlled by the inherently present but not shown control system (as established earlier) and would be capable of requesting a demand output, as it is connected to the load and thus can read the load demand. Furthermore, it is capable of regulating the amount of material supplied to the fuel processing system due to a restart request via valves [146, 154, 152] and blower

[116C] such that the amount supplied is more than that of the normal state. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claim 13, Meyer et al.'s system would be capable of changing the material supplied to the fuel processing section [104], and thus with its inherent controller would be capable of supplying a greater amount of material to the fuel processing system than normal supply in the state of normal operations when output demand is not greater than a preset level after a start of the stop control in the hydrogen purge mode. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claims 17, 24, 27, and 28, Meyer et al. does not teach that the power generated by their fuel cell system is used to power the motor of a mobile object.

However, the similar system of Epp et al. recites the use of its fuel cell system for a submarine, which is a mobile system with a motor. (Although not specifically mentioned that the motor is drawing power from the fuel cell, the fuel cell is capable of providing power for the motor system.) The motivation for using a fuel cell in a mobile system, namely the motor, would be to use an environmentally friendly source of electricity needed to run the motor (as opposed to traditional fuels). Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to use a widely known, more environmentally friendly form of electricity to run a mobile device, namely the motor.

As to claim 18, the Meyer et al.'s system has been obviated to be used in a mobile object, as seen above. However, Meyer et al.'s system does not teach that the predetermined parameter includes a parameter representing an on-off state of a starter

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switch on the motor, where the stop control module executes the stop control it the hydrogen purge mode when the starter witch is off. The motivation for providing such a control within a vehicle system is that the fuel cell does not generate power (for the motor) during the shutdown system, and so by corroborating the (lack of) power demand with the off position of the starter switch will prevent the fuel cell from providing power after the motor is no longer engaged. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to combine a parameter for the on-off state of the starter switch of the motor (startup/shutdown) with the stop control module in order to keep the fuel cell from generating unnecessary power.

10. Claims 8, 9, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meyer et al. in view of Epp et al. as evidenced by Tillmetz et al. (as applied to claim 1), in further view of Aoyama et al.

As to claim 8, the combination of Meyer et al., Epp et al., and Tillmetz et al. does not teach a temperature retention module that keeps temperature in the hydrogen separation module, wherein the stop control module controls the temperature retention module to keep the temperature in the hydrogen separation module during the hydrogen no-purge mode.

Aoyama et al. teach a heat exchanger [50] that is adjacent to the hydrogen separator [60]. The motivation for providing a heat exchanger to the hydrogen separation module during the no purge mode is that the hydrogen separator membrane has a tendency of becoming fragile or brittle during low temperature absorbing (para



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0006, lines 1-4). (The time that the most hydrogen would be absorbed would be during the no-purge time rather than the purging time.) Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to provide a heat exchanger adjacent to keep the hydrogen separator at a certain temperature in order to prevent the separator membrane from becoming brittle.

As to claim 9, the combination of Meyer et al., Epp et al., and Tillmetz et al., and Aoyama et al. does not teach stopping the operation of the temperature retention module via a stop control module, when stop control in the hydrogen no-purge mode continues for at least a present time period. However, this function would be obviated with the combined structure of Epp et al., and Tillmetz et al., and Aoyama et al.. This is because after startup (no purge) the fuel provided to the reformer and subsequently the hydrogen separator comes from burner [110], which maintains the temperature of the hydrogen that is provided to the hydrogen separator. The motivation for discontinuing the use of the heat exchanger on the hydrogen separator after a period of time is to conserve the energy that the heat exchanger would use. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to apply time constraints to operation of the heat exchanger in order to save energy.

As to claim 26 Meyer et al. does not teach does not teach that the power generated by their fuel cell system is used to power the motor of a mobile object.

However, the similar system of Epp et al. recites the use of its fuel cell system for a submarine, which is a mobile system with a motor. (Although not specifically

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mentioned that the motor is drawing power from the fuel cell, the fuel cell is capable of providing power for the motor system.) The motivation for using a fuel cell in a mobile system, namely the motor, would be to use an environmentally friend source of electricity needed to run the motor (as opposed to traditional fuels). Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to use a widely known, more environmentally friend form of electricity to run a mobile device, namely the motor.

11. Claims 1, 7, 14-16, 19, 20, 23, 25, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Epp et al. in view of Meyer et al.

As to claim 1, Epp et al. teaches a power system with a fuel gas generation system [301] with a vaporizer [312] and a reformer [313] and hydrogen separator [302], where the hydrogen fuel is delivered to the fuel cell via inlet [380] (fig. 3). Epp et al. does not teach a shut down system, however, a fuel cell that operates inherently has a startup and shutdown mode, wherein the shutdown mode inherently stops the supply of the reactants to the fuel cells. This signal is accomplished by a control system for the system, which is inherent but not shown in fig. 3. The indication of the presence of a control system is the fact that valves [359, 391] and sensors [361, 363] are in the system and must provide information to a controller to be controlled by said controller.

However Epp et al. does not teach a purge gas supply module that supplies specified purge gas for the removal of hydrogen from eh hydrogen separation module. Meyer et al. teach a fuel cell system with a fuel processing system [104], similar to that of Epp et al.'s system. However Meyer et al.'s system provides a shutdown process,

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which purges the fuel processing system [104] of the residual hydrogen (para 0026, lines 1-3). The motivation for combining the purge system of Meyer et al. with Epp et al.'s system is to cut back on reactant damage to the fuel processing system (which the is vaporizer [312], reformer [313], and hydrogen separator [302] in Epp et al.'s system) and to avoid the possibility of combustion in the instance that the fuel processing system does not react 100% and fuel is present within the fuel processing system. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to apply Meyer et al.'s purge system to Epp et al.'s system in order to cut down on reactant damage to the fuel processing system and in order to cut down on the change of accidental combustion.

The obviated structure of Epp et al. with Meyer et al.'s pure system would then be capable of having a stop control module (present with the inherent control system) which has a hydrogen purge mode and hydrogen no-purge mode, where leftover hydrogen is purged and where hydrogen is not delivered to the fuel cells, respectively.

It has been held that the recitation of an element is "capable" of performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. *In re Hutchinson*, 69 USPQ 138.

While intended use recitations and other types of functional language cannot be entirely disregarded. However, in apparatus, article, and composition claims, intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim

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drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. In re Casey, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967); In re Otto, 312 F.2d 937, 938, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Claims directed to apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. In re Danly, 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959). See also MPEP § 2114.

The manner of operating the device does not differentiate an apparatus claim from the prior art. A claim containing a “recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus” if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1987).

As to claim 7, Epp et al.’s system has compressor [372] between the fuel inlet [380] and the hydrogen separator [302] (fig. 3).

However, Epp et al. does not teach the stop control module to control the compressor (booster mechanism) to boost the pressure of hydrogen in the hydrogen supply line in the no-purge mode. However, Meyer et al.’s system mentions startup (no-purge mode) and shutdown (purge) (para 0023-0029). The motivation for combining this control on Epp et al.’s system would be to provide more hydrogen to the fuel cell during start up in order to bring it to full power. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to

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implement the startup and shutdown functions of Meyer et al. in conjunction with the compressor of Epp et al. in order to provide a quicker startup for the fuel cell.

As to claim 14, Epp et al. teach the use of a secondary battery [306] for supplementing the power generated by the fuel cell (col. 11, lines 8-12). As Epp et al.'s system says that the power of the battery is only used when the fuel cell generated power is not enough, a sort of determination control is inherently applied to the load, fuel cell, and battery to determine if the battery power is needed. Because some sort of control is applied to it Epp et al.'s system is capable of controlling the supply of electric power from the secondary battery according to a state of the stop control of the fuel cells. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claim 15, the battery in Epp et al.'s system inherently has an output demand input module that receives an output demand to the power system, wherein in response to the output demand of not greater than a preset level, the power control module controls the secondary battery to output electric power. The support for this is stated within Epp et al.'s use for the battery – the fact that it is only employed when the demand of electrical load [360] exceeds the output of the fuel cell stack [305] (col. 11, lines 8-12). As it talks about the demand of load [360] and output of fuel cell stack [305], it inherently has an output demand and input module. Furthermore, inherent control module has been previously established of being capable of executing the stop control in the hydrogen no-purge mode.

As to claim 16, Epp et al. does not teach that the secondary battery has a state of charge measurement module, wherein the stop control module executes the stop control of the hydrogen purge mode when the observed state of charge is not higher than that of a preset level.

However, there is motivation for providing the state-of-charge measurement module. The motivation for providing such a module on the secondary battery is to ensure that the load (in this case the submarine) has enough power to sustain the load. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to include the state-of-charge measurement module on the battery in order to provide the user of the load with a warning about battery replacement in order to ensure that the load will function. (There is motivation for applying a control system to the stop controller to purge when the state of charge is not higher than a certain value; it is in order to ensure proper shut down of the fuel cell system. Not only is this function obviated, but the system of Epp et al. would be capable of being programmed for such a function with the obviated state-of-charge measurement module on the secondary battery.)

As to claim 19, Epp et al.'s fuel cell system is used in submarines (as indicated by the title), which is a mobile object that has a motor as the driving source. Although it is specifically mentioned that the motor is drawing power from the fuel cell, the fuel cell is capable of providing power for the motor system. (See rejection of claim 1 for the Office's position on "capable" of for an apparatus claim.)

As to claim 20, the combination of Epp et al.'s mobile object (a submarine) and Meyer et al.'s startup/shutdown system provide a restart control module that restarts the fuel gas generation system (the end of the startup mode) (para 0028). This thus provides power to the mobile object, allowing it to move (as the use of fuel cell power in the motor has been previously obviated). As the startup mode follows a shutdown mode, it inherently restarts from a purge mode setting.

As to claim 23, the previously obviated fuel cell/submarine combination of Epp et al. and the startup/shutdown process of Meyer et al. is applied. Meyer et al. teaches that during startup the fuel cell that the anode is initially purged (para 0027). This is continued until the reformer [143] and the shift converter [136] (replaced with hydrogen separator) is approximately 250°C.

Meyer et al. does not, however, teach to purge the to purge the fuel processing system until the temperature at the reformer [134] shift converter [136] is 250°C. However, the motivation for purging the fuel processing system as well is to cleanse the system of any contaminants that could have gathered during the off time, so they would not be provided to the fuel cell once normal function of the fuel cell and fuel processor commenced. Furthermore, the flow of purge gases would aid in the warm-up process. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to purge the fuel processor when the shift converter is at a lower temperature than the preset level in order to purify and to warm the system up.

As to claims 25 and 29, Epp et al. teaches that the fuel cell system is used in submarines (as indicated by the title), but it does not specifically mention that power generated by their fuel cell system is used to power the motor of a mobile object. However, since the fuel cell system is applied to a submarine, the power generated is capable of being used for motor.

12. Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Epp et al. in view of Meyer et al. (as applied to claims 1 and 19) in further view of US 2001/0016276 (Yamanashi).

As to claim 21, the mobile object (submarine) of Epp et al. inherently has a speed controller.

However, Epp et al. does not teach that the moving speed measurement module measures the speed and that the restart control module restarts the fuel gas generation systems when the observed moving speed exceeds a present level in the purge mode.

Yamanashi teach a system, where a fuel cell stack and reformer (although absent the hydrogen separator) is seen to be connected to a controller (fig. 1). Combining the fuel cell and vehicle control unit, which has vehicle speed sensor [25] would give the system the capability of performing the function as listed above. The motivation to combining the control system of Yamanashi with the combined system of Epp et al. and Meyer et al. is to more efficiently operate the fuel cell stack in tandem with the vehicle for easier and more efficient use. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to combine the control system of Yamanashi with the combined system of Epp et al. and



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Meyer et al. in order to provide better usage of the fuel cell in combination with a motor vehicle.

As to claim 22, the previously obviated fuel cell/submarine combination of Epp et al. and the startup/shutdown process of Meyer et al. is applied. Meyer et al. teaches that during startup the fuel cell that the anode is initially purged (para 0027). This is continued until the reformer [143] and the shift converter [136] (replaced with hydrogen separator) is approximately 250°C.

Meyer et al. does not, however, teach to purge the to purge the fuel processing system until the temperature at the reformer [134] shift converter [136] is 250°C. However, the motivation for purging the fuel processing system as well is to cleanse the system of any contaminants that could have gathered during the off time, so they would not be provided to the fuel cell once normal function of the fuel cell and fuel processor commenced. Furthermore, the flow of purge gases would aid in the warm-up process. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to purge the fuel processor when the shift converter is at a lower temperature than the preset level in order to purify and to warm the system up.

13. Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Aoyama et al. or Meyer et al. in view of Epp et al., Tillmetz.et al., and Aoyama et al., as applied to claims 1 and 8, in further view of US 6391484 (Keskula et al.).

Although Aoyama et al. or alternately Meyer et al. in view of Epp et al., Tillmetz et al., and Aoyama et al., teach a heat exchanger [50] (heat retention module) that is adjacent to the hydrogen separator [60], wherein that the hydrogen separator membrane has a tendency of becoming fragile or brittle during low temperature absorbing (see Aoyama et al. para 0006, lines 1-4). (The time that the most hydrogen would be absorbed would be during the no-purge time rather than the purging time.) It is not taught that the heat retention module is either (1) an electric heater or (2) a combustor (as required by claims 31 and 32, respectively).

However, Keskula et al. teach heating modules, specifically that heat exchangers are known to obtain heat from combustors (as applied to claim 32), and that another known heating device for use in a fuel cell is an electric heater (col. 4). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to use either a combustor or an electric heater as the heat retention module, as both are known to be heat retention devices (like a heat exchanger, embodied in Aoyama et al.), and thus using a combustor or electric heater as the heat retention device would have yielded the predictable result of acting as a heat retention.

### ***Response to Arguments***

14. Applicant's arguments filed January 22, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Examiner's position is that any system with a shut down control can be considered to include a hydrogen module and will result in a purge.

Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's interpretation on the previous rejection. The fact that a system has a shutdown control that controls switches and valves (para 0025-0026) is indicative of a control system (although one is not explicitly shown). Accordingly, the control is capable of operating in such a purge manner, as the obviated invention is structurally the same as the *claimed* invention.

Applicant argues that Examiner has not provided a basis to support inherency.

Examiner respectfully disagrees and submits that the basis for inherency was provided. The portion that is relied upon on the basis for inherency is repeated herein: "Although a stop input module and stop control module is not specifically mentioned in Meyer et al.'s system, one inherently exist. This is exemplified by the fact that it talks about a shutdown system and the controlling of a switch [132], valves [141, 152, 154, 156], and blowers [116B, 116C]. In further accordance with Meyer et al.'s shutdown process, diverter valves [140, 149] are opened, which results in purging both sides of both sides of the fuel cell as well as the fuel processing system [104] of residual hydrogen and carbon monoxide (para 0025; para 0026, lines 1-4)." The fact that valves and switches are controlled are indicative that there is some sort of control controlling them (i.e. control unit). Examiner is unsure why Meyer et al.'s system fails to inherently have a control unit, when control processes are clearly being done.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

15. Claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is an Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: none of the prior art of record, alone or in combination, appear to teach, suggest, or render obvious the invention of at least claim 30.

Claim 30 teaches a power system comprising the elements therein.

The prior art of record do not teach, suggest or motivate the power system of claim 30. They do not teach the connection of a purge gas supply line to a chemical reaction module, a non-permeating gas supply line as well as an anode off gas supply line to the same combustor, valves on a material supply line, purge gas supply line, non-permeating line, hydrogen supply line, and an anode off gas supply line, wherein all of the valves are connected to a controller.

For example Aoyama et al., Epp et al., and LaPierre et al. (made of record below) do not connect both the non-permeating gas supply line and the anode off gas supply line to the same combustion unit. Kaufmann (made of record below) teaches of connecting both the non-permeating gas supply line and the anode off gas supply line to the same combustion unit (catalytic burner [8], fig. 5). However the specifics to the fuel reformation prior to the hydrogen-separating unit is unclear. Therefore none of the prior art of record teach the claimed invention of claim 30. Additionally, it would not be obvious to combine Kaufmann et al.'s connection with any of the other prior art systems. Rearranging the connections anode off gas supply line and the non-permeating gas supply line would manipulate the teachings of the other references in a way that would destroy the original teachings.

***Conclusion***

The following references are made of record herein are found pertinent to Applicant's disclosure but are not relied upon for the rejection: US 6358278 (LaPierre et al.) and US 2005/0089730 (Kaufmann).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to EUGENIA WANG whose telephone number is (571)272-4942. The examiner can normally be reached on 7 - 4:30 Mon. - Thurs., EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/E. W./  
Examiner, Art Unit 1795

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/Gregg Cantelmo/

for E. Wang, Examiner of Art Unit 1795